

A Moderate Proposal For Addressing Global Warming

Global warming is no doubt one of the most pressing issues of our time. The flood of incoming data continues to confirm that global warming is real, and all indications are that it is caused by human activity. In the face of this overwhelming stream of information the naysayers have grown very few. Most scientists working in the field believe that global warming is a fact, and that it is caused by human activity. Of the few scientists who claim that global warming isn't real or that it's not caused by humans, a significant percentage work for the very industries which are believed to be major contributors to global warming.

The glaciers in Glacier National Park are melting so fast that if it keeps up at this rate, in twenty or thirty years they will all be gone. Indeed, glaciers all over the world are melting away at a dizzying pace. The sea ice covering the Arctic Ocean is also thinning and shrinking fast. The Sahara Desert is gobbling up the the grasslands to the south at a frightening speed.

Some of the small nations in the South Pacific are worried that they could soon be under water. Most of the world's major cities lie near sea level, which means that if the world's ice continues to melt they will be flooded. Higher temperatures also make for stronger storms, such as the one that ravaged New Orleans. Hotter weather also means higher evaporation rates, which leads to drier conditions, and hence, more frequent and more severe wildfires. The wildfires

that ravaged California last summer could be a harbinger of things to come.

Most scientists who have studied global warming have concluded that it is largely caused by the burning of fossil fuels, such as coal and oil. It is therefore obvious that we have to reduce our consumption of coal and oil. The problem is half our electricity comes from coal, and most of our cars run on petroleum. How are we going to keep our lights on and our cars running?

As for myself, having watched this disaster unfold for years, and seeing that no one could stop it, and realizing that if something isn't done soon, we may not live to tell the tale; I have decided to put forth my Moderate Proposal for your consideration. I propose that the time has come to embrace nuclear power, as some of our more forward thinking environmentalists have also said. The advantages of nuclear power are many; for one, it could easily replace dirty, coal fired power plants and prevent millions of tons of greenhouse gases from entering our atmosphere. For another, a massive power plant building program would help solve our present economic problems. Bonds could be issued, and investors and pension funds would have a safe place to put their money. Thousands of unemployed construction workers could be put to work building nuclear power plants. The money these workers would make and spend would ripple through the economy; restaurants would have plenty of business, motels would be full, auto workers would have plenty to do building trucks for all the construction workers.

Of course there's the problem of what to do with all the radioactive waste,

but I say “Where there's a will there's a way.” For instance, consumer goods could be made from the waste; after all, there is precedent; just think of all the smoke detectors that have already been made from radioactive waste. But there's no need to stop at smoke detectors, glow sticks could be made from the waste and sold at concerts and other events. Children's toys could be made from it; glow in the dark toys are so much fun! But consumer goods are just a start; some of the radioactive waste could be made into inexpensive, reliable dirty bombs to replace our expensive, aging and delicate nuclear arsenal. And speaking of nuclear weapons, weapons grade plutonium is a by-product of nuclear power, so a highly profitable nuclear weapons export business would be assured. Large, expensive nuclear devices could be sold to wealthy oil producing Arab states, which would help with the balance of power in the Middle East. Smaller, less expensive nuclear weapons could be sold to poorer, Latin American and African countries. But we're not just talking about self interest here, with our export of nuclear arms we'd be helping to spread freedom, because once every nation has nuclear weapons, little countries won't have to worry about getting bullied by more powerful countries. But why limit ourselves to selling nuclear arms to governments when we could greatly expand our business by selling them to anyone who has the money? No doubt we could sell a few to Bin Laden. Once he sees how much we're helping him, surely he'll stop trying to harm us.

Of course, not everyone will be able to afford nuclear weapons, which

brings us back to the question of what to do with the rest of the nuclear waste. I propose that some of it be made into small, inexpensive, radiological devices, (dirty bombs) and sold dirt cheap to those who can't afford true nuclear weapons. Once every household has a dirty bomb, (that's not a nice name; let's call it a radiological device) there will be no more oppression, and freedom will rain down like fallout. Perhaps the greatest benefit of selling nuclear weapons and radiological devices to anyone and everyone, is that it will help address two of the root causes of global warming: over population and over development. In addition, the dust thrown up from all the ensuing nuclear wars should block out some of the solar radiation and help cool the planet. Presto! Global warming solved!

Of course others, mostly well intentioned idealists, have suggested their own ideas of how to solve global warming. One the more popular ideas is to replace our carbon based economy with an economy based on renewable energy, such as solar and wind power. The problem with solar power is what do you do at night? The problem with wind is, what do you do on a calm day? Solar power may be just the thing for a few hippies growing marijuana up in Humboldt County or for an art gallery in Sausalito, but it has never supplied more than a miniscule fraction of the nation's electricity. Wind may be just fine if you're already a billionaire like "T Bone Pickens" but it produces only a tiny portion of the country's power. Another idea is to build energy efficient homes and

appliances and weather proof existing buildings. Do you really think that contractors can be bothered with such things, or that home owners are actually going to tear out perfectly good windows in order to replace them with triple pane glass?

So three cheers to my solution, clink, clink.